Protection list in ASEAN agreement

1389. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any protection list in ASEAN agreement which was approved by all member countries; and

(b) if so, which items are included in this list?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) India and the ASEAN member countries, except Singapore, have Exclusion (Negative) Lists of products on which no tariff concession is offered.

(b) Complete lists of India and ASEAN member countries' offers indicating the details of items included in the Exclusion (Negative) Lists are available at http://commerce.gov.in/trade/international_ta_indasean.asp

FTA with EU

1390. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that FTA with European Union could not be finalized even after seven rounds of talks;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if so, the efforts made to finalize the FTA at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government of India is negotiating a bilateral Broad - based Trade and Investment Agreement with the European Union (EU).

The negotiations commenced in June 2007 covering areas of Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Investment, Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade Remedies, Customs Cooperation & Trade Facilitation, Dispute Settlement, Competition and Intellectual Property Rights. So far, seven rounds of negotiations have been held. The Seventh Round of Negotiations was held in July, 2009. Legal texts of the proposed agreement in all these areas have been exchanged and are being discussed. Tariff liberalisation offers have also been exchanged on trade in goods.

(b) and (c) EU has 27 Member countries having varying trade interests and has to consult all member countries before moving ahead on different issues. India also undertakes consultations with the stake holders to assess the impact of various offers and requests made by the EU for the FTA negotiations to protect the interests of Indian agricultural, industrial and other sectors. So far, seven

rounds of negotiations have been held and progress has been made by both sides. The next round of negotiations is scheduled to be held in January 2010. We are committed for an early, balanced and successful conclusion of the negotiations.

Fate of Doha round WTO discussion

1391. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the fate of Doha round discussion of WTO; and

(b) whether USA and European Union have agreed to reduce their agriculture subsidy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Following the impasse in the Doha Round WTO talks at the mini-ministerial meeting held in July 2008, the general opinion among members has been that there should be early resumption of the talks. Similar views were expressed by Ministers, Heads of Government and Governments at various multi-lateral fora held during the past two years. India, thereupon took the initiative to host an informal ministerial meeting in September 2009 to re-energise Doha.

Multilateral discussions have since begun in the WTO on the basis of the draft modalities text proposed by the Chair of the Negotiating Group on Agriculture on December 6, 2008. As per the draft modalities text brought out by the Chair of the Negotiating Group on Agriculture on 6 December 2008, the US would take a 70% cut in their Overall Trade-distorting Domestic Support (OTDS) which would reduce their ceiling level of OTDS from the current US$ 48.2 billion to US$ 14.5 billion. The EC is to cut OTDS from €110.3 bn to € 22.6 bn. India as a member of the G-20 coalition is seeking reduction in subsidies in developed countries. Multilateral discussions are underway.

MEP of Basmati rice

1392. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has not so far notified the Minimum Export Price of Basmati which may result dent in our export of Basmati;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Empowered Group of Ministers has recommended lowering of Minimum Export Price (MEP) from US $1100 a tonne to US $800 per tonne; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for delay in notifying the MEP?